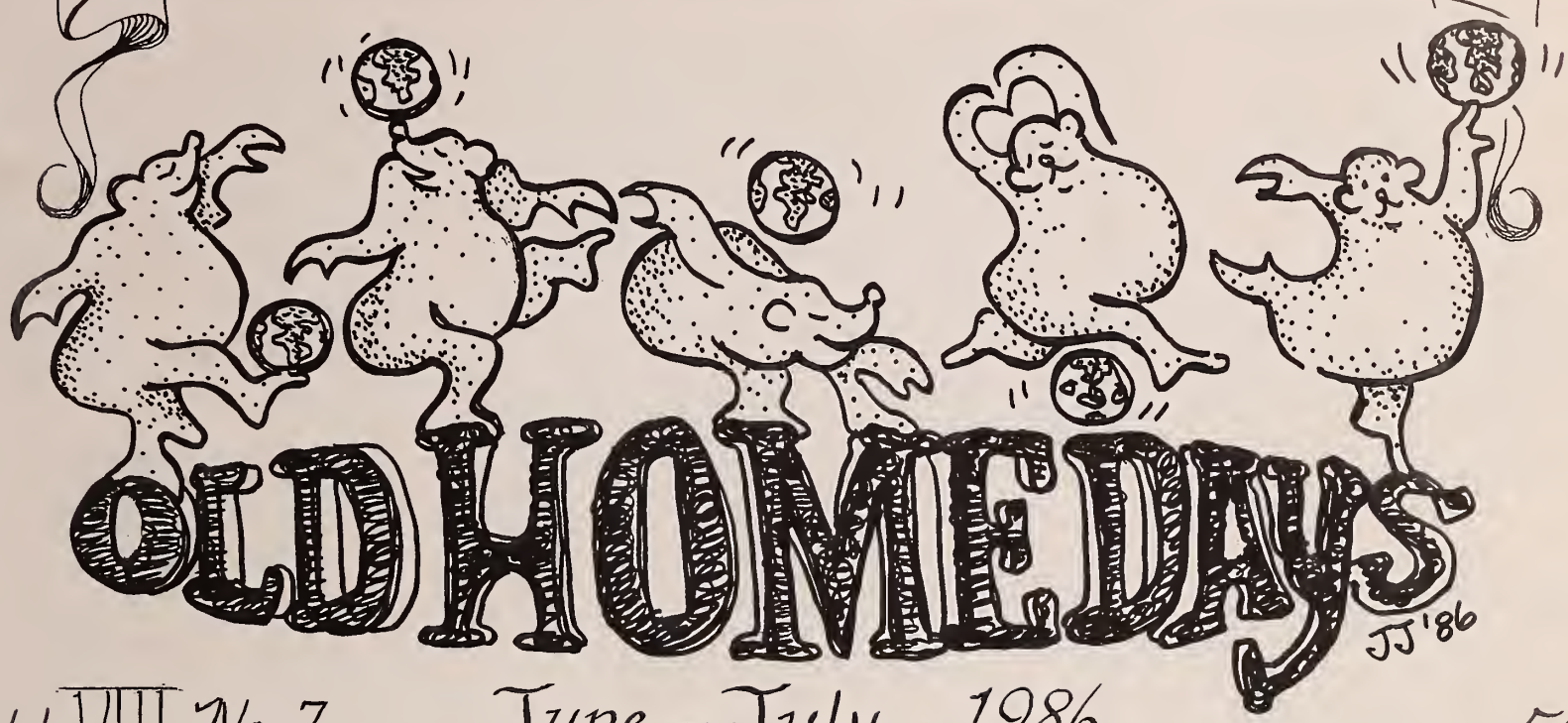
WENDELL POST



Vol. VIII No. 7 June - July 1986 50¢

Amusement Park Derailment - "Principal's Worst Nightmare"

It was nearing the end of a beautiful, sunny day June 3, the day of Swift River School's annual outing to Mountain Park in Holyoke. Ten children and three adults--Carolyn Croteau and Sheilah Browning, both teachers, and Principal Leonard Strauss--climbed aboard the big roller coaster. This was one of the last chances for a ride. Schoolmates were scattered throughout the park; "In ten minutes we would have called them to the busses,"said Strauss.

The roller coaster is generally considered the most memorable ride at the park. On this ride, the thirteen thrillseekers from Wendell and New Salem would get more memory, and more ride, than they'd bargained for.

A continuous chain ratcheted the train tc the top of the lacy structure, high above the park. As their car went over the top, some children screamed with the thrill of momentary weightlessness combined with anticipation. Like a near-hurricane wind, they swooped down into the valley, then up and around the corners, living an intensified and endless existence in the minute or so until the ride reached the last peak and coasted home.

But the ride wasn't over yet. Instead of stopping at the platform where passengers ordinarily disembark, the train charged around the corner and was caught on the chain that racheted it to the top a second time.

At this point some noticed frantic activity by the operator of the coaster, whose job is to take tickets, secure passengers with a safety bar in front of the seat, and apply the brake to slow the train at the end. Some of the kids thought they were the beneficiaries of a free ride, but others began to sense something was wrong. Ms. Croteau reportedly yelled, "Hold onto the children!"

They went over the top a second time and succumbed to the pull of gravity and the cooperation of well-oiled wheel bearings. First grader Nathan Boland called the ride "Very very scary."

As for his principal, "I conjured flying off some of the high points," recalled

cont' p. 12

Effort 'Too Late'; Bridge Goes In

Meeting after a public hearing on May 20, the Wendell selectboard deemed untimely any effort to stop action on the construction on the $308,000 Arch St. Bridge in the "Erving Center" section of Wendell.

By this time--May 26--the structural steel order had been delivered and a crane was operating that day to place girders and bracing.

Signers of a petition delivered in March had voiced concern over the soaring expenses for the bridge which leads to six properties including one residence and two summer cabins. Spokesman Jonathan von Ranson says that the state has been

cont' p. 12

★ New Directory Inside ★

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PRICE CHANGE NOTICE

With this issue, the newsstand price of the Wendell Post goes up to 50¢. Although the paper is written, typed, and laid out entirely with volunteer energy, printing costs have increased over the decade during which the paper has been published. The paper has also increased substantially in size.

The staff of the Post hopes the readers will not be inconvenienced by the change and, furthermore, that they will understand and support the decision.

Town Considering Depot Rd. Site

The annual town meeting last month authorized the Selectmen to enter into contracts for the planning and construction of a combined Highway Maintenance Facility and Fire Station.

The Selectmen planned to acquire a site for the new building by an exchange of land with the State. The town owns some land on the north side of Montague Road beyond the intersection with West Road, about 2½ miles from Wendell Center, which it proposes to swap for a tract belonging to the State also on the north side of Montague Road jsut beyond the intersection with Bullard Pasture Road and about one mile from the center. Proximity to the center is obviously desirable. For the State, the tract farther away from the center is desirable because it is contiguous with the main part of Wendell State Forest, which the tract nearer the center is not.

The swap was discussed with two officials of the Department of Environmental Management, Carroll Holmes and Bill Rivers who favor the proposal. It will need to be approved in the State Legislature by a two-thirds vote.

However, getting the swap approved will probably take at least a year, maybe even two years. In order to avoid such a delay in getting the building started,

cont' p. 12

WENDELL POST

Vol. VIII No. 7

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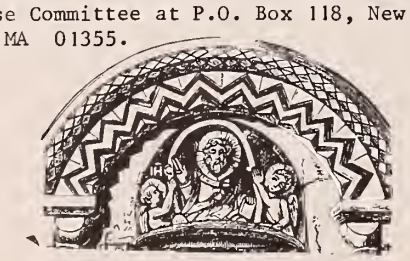
Meetinghouse Update

On April 25 the 1794 Meetinghouse Preservation Committee in New Salem sponsored a benefit slide show on the Quabbin Reservoir. More than 150 people turned out for J.R. Greene's enlightening presentation, "The Creation of the Quabbin Reservoir." Mr. Greene, a native of Athol, is a well known historian on this subject, his performance was humorous and informative.

A second benefit is being planned for July 19, the evening of the New Salem Old Home Day. "Ragtime Revival" will feature a cabaret extravaganza. Nat Needle's band will perform live rag-time music; along with songs, old-time radio scenes based on local history will be performed. Bathtub punch and other edible delights will be served. Period costumes are encouraged for all and are sure to set the mood. A pamphlet on the history of the 1794 Meetinghouse will be on sale.

All proceeds from this event will go towards the restoration of the Meetinghouse. It is the intention of the committee to restore the building for community and cultural functions. Those interested in this project or future events can contact the Meetinghouse Committee at P.O. Box 118, New Salem, MA 01355.



Man Arrested In Struggle After Meter Reader Assault

On May 12, a meter reader from Massachusetts Electric was physically assaulted by a visiter to Wendell while in the course of doing her job. The incident occured in the morning at the Stone Road residence of Jimi Two-feathers.

According to police record, the woman, at her first day on the job in the Wendell area was warned of a dog and told vehemently to leave by Stephen Beeman. When she got into her vehicle, Beeman shut the door on her legs, frightening and hurting her. She drove to a near neighbor's and phoned her supervisor and the Wendell police.

Later in the day, Police Chief, Ed Chase arrested Beeman and took him to the Frankli County Jail. At arraignment, his trial was set in Orange on June 16th.

According to Jimi Two-Feathers, who spoke to Chief Chase and later to Beeman, the arrest was anything but smooth.

At the arraignment, discrepancies appeared. Questions arose as to the mental state of Beeman at the time, his violence with Chief Chase, Chase's techniques during the arrest, and why Beeman was taken to Franklin County Jail(Where Chase works).

Beeman was visiting Wendell from New Hampshire.

The Mass. Electric employee's supervisor reports that she is still on the job.

County Interfaith Council Formed

"There are so many riches we have to share among the religious communities of our county. This council is one way to share them," Rabbi Louis A. Rieser said, commenting on the newly formed Franklin County Interfaith Council. Last February representatives of 9 county religious groups created the Council.

Excitement at the first meeting ran high as individuals suggested a wide range of activities for the council to pursue. Possible directions included focussing on issues of homelessness in Franklin County, a follow-up to last November's successful conference on Jewish-Christian Dialogue, addressing issues of peace-making, and sponsorship of the Community Thanksgiving Service in Greenfield.

The statement of purpose adopted by the Council members contains a variety of goals: "The creation of a forum where we can meet and discuss across religious lines; becoming a vehicle for greater understanding of our collective riches; offering a focus for action toward common goals; and fostering the opportunity for common celebrations."

Officers elected for the newly formed Council are Rabbi Louis A. Rieser from Temple Israel of Greenfield as president, the Rev. Frances Reece Day of All Souls Church Unitarian Universalist in Greenfield as vice-president, and the Rev. William McCoy of Second Congregational Church in Greenfield as secretary/treasurer. The groups represented at the inaugural meeting were Bahai, Christian Scientist, Episcopalian, Jewish, Unitarian Universalists, and United Church of Christ.

WENDELL POST

Next Issue: Aug.-Sept.
Meeting July 14, 7 p.m.
at von Ranson/DunLany's
Deadline July 28 5 p.m.
at Wendell Country Store

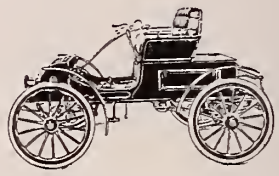
Poetry

By a New Salem Brook During Midwinter's Thaw

Singing waters caress my soul,
A gentle breeze fans my heart,
Blue sky coloring my mind clear,
While soft earth massages winter-weary feet.

I lack nothing now: I am whole
And, for this moment, at peace with the world;
For singing waters have caressed my soul.

Mountainbird 1/20/86



New Auto Salvage Business Proposed

Bill Fellows of Orange is currently in the process of applying for a Class 3 license from the Wendell Selectboard to operate an auto salvage business. Wendell Auto Redemption, the proposed business, would be located off of Mormon Hollow Road just north of the Merchant residence.

Fellows hopes to utilize four to six acres of land now owned by his family, for an operation that takes in "two or three cars a week." The cars would be stripped for useable parts, and "the carcasses trucked away," according to Fellows. He plans to deal primarily with Chevrolet and Toyota vehicles.

Fellows also says that "any buildings will be of nice looking wood," and he claims that none of the operation will be visible to the public, locating it some 400 yards downhill from Mormon Hollow Road. "This will be environmentally and aesthetically sound. I'm not going to have a junkyard. I've seen too many of them. And I don't want a used car lot, either."

The Conservation Commission has inspected the site, and preliminary results indicate no reason to disallow the license. "I don't think the Conservation Commission should use the Wetlands Act as a tool to stop this," says Charles Smith of the Commission. "It isn't obvious that a wetland is there, only a pseudo-wetland on a terraced hillside. There is a seasonal rivulet, and there might be problems with spring runoff."

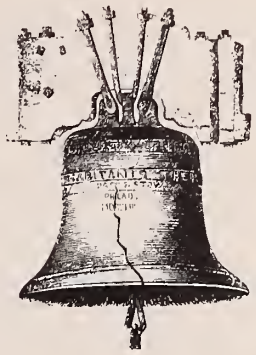
The Selectboard will receive recommendations from the Conservation Commission as well as the Planning Board and Hazardous Waste Coordinator to base its decision on whether to grant the license, and if so, the conditions to be met. "In the past there's been no oversight from the town," says selectman Jim Slavas. "Mormon Hollow Auto just grew, so our new criteria will be more stringent." The dismantling area, for example, will have to be enclosed, including a concrete slab with storage drums to contain any spills of gasoline, oil, antifreeze, etc.

A public hearing will be scheduled for the town to comment on Fellows' proposed business. "We can add conditions to the license based on concerns from neighbors and other townspeople," says Slavas.

In the meantime, Fellows hopes to set a date for an "on-site discussion" with any concerned residents.

- Robert Streeter

$½ Million Fiscal '87 Budget Features New Highway, Fire Facility



It lasted late into the night, and when the 1986 Annual Town Meeting adjourned at 11:30 pm, May 8, the complete warrant of 23 items concerning the town's money, contracts policies and resolutions on national issues had been acted upon.

A $540,537 operating budget was passed, up 11% from last year. (the school portion of $312,238 was up 14%, due largely to greater Wendell enrollment at Franklin County Technical School) Town employees got a 5% salary increase.

The sum of $220,000 was borrowed for a new combined highway garage/firestation, a sodium vapor streetlight plan for the center curtailed, and a new town pesticide bylaw was passed. A soul-searching discussion about Wendell's trash led up to a decision to sign a contract for a regional incinerator. In one of the last items, Wendell joined the Sanctuary movement.

FIRE STATION/HIGHWAY GARAGE

In a delicate bit of money juggling, Wendell will borrow $220,000 from the Farmers Home Administration, invest it, repay with Revenue Sharing funds, and end up with a new headquarters for both the fire department and the highway department. The voters accepted the selectboard's proposal for this financing package initially in a Special town Meeting immediately preceeding the Annual with little question about either the method or the objective. Part of the goal expressed by the selectboard was to free the present fire station to become a Town Hall annex for office space. There was surprisingly little debate about the need for the new or expanded facilities.

STREET LIGHTS

Ever since the March 20 Special Town Meeting, when an article recommending four high-intensity sodium vapor streetlights was accepted, a group of citizens has been seeking to have the plan dropped or changed. Janet Mankowsky, who led the opposition, argued that the lights were aesthetically deficient "crime litkts" which gave off an eery orange glow inappropriate to the center of Wendell. Two, she said, were entirely unnecessary, and two could be drastically reduced in brightness. The sentiment of the meeting was so obviously with her that the moderator asked her to forego her speech ("Darn, it was a good speech," she informed the meeting. The audience took her word and applauded her) and instead make a motion which she did. The Selectboard explained its original recommendation, but the motion was overwhelmingly passed: no new light at the main intersection or at the Center Schoo and reduced-size mercury vapor lights (a whiter light) on the Town Hall/Fire Station pole and in front of the highway garage.

INCINERATOR

Wendell's trash presently gets put out of sight in a landfill in Belchertown. The dump is reportedly becoming filled to capacity, and tipping fees (the per ton price for disposal there) have increased dramatically. Against that backdrop, Wendell was given a now or never invitation to sign a 20 year contract to join a regional disposal system centered around a proposed incinerator to be built in Holyoke. Hesitation to sign with Holyoke Energy Recovery Co., the private firm, stemmed from both financial and environmental worries. "I for one am becoming more and more distrustful of our technology," said Anne Zak. She wondered aloud if Wendell wouldn't be better off wroking on recycling and otherwise reducing the volume of its waste stream.

There was a sense that Wendell is locked into a problematic and increasingly costly course. "Can we get out of this contract in the future?" somebody asked. Jim Slavas, chair of the selectboard, said he couldn't say for sure, but reasoned that since the consortium had said it wasn't going to be able to let new towns in, they might even welcome a town dropping out.

The selectboard was authorized to sign.

PESTICIDE BYLAW

When a 1981 Wendell bylaw controlling the application of pesticides on railroad and utility rights of way was overturned by the Mass. Supreme Judicial Court last year, the Board of Health returned with a proposal that addressed the court's objections. (This document, which essentially reinforces the restrictions contained in the Mass. General Laws, covers the poisons, the people who may utilize them, and the areas and manner in which they may be used. It gives the board the right, after consulting the Mass. Pesticide Board, to prescribe conditions under which the substances may be applied or take other action. Railroads, utilities, and anyone intending to spray an acre or mord or do aerial spraying, must give 60 days' notice before spraying. The Board of Health will review these and other "significant uses" to reinforce labelling and health restrictions, especially in critical areas to be designated after further study and public review.

FINANCIAL ADVICE

Wendell voters appropriated $1000 to match a $5,000 state grant to hire someone to make recommendations to streamline the town's financial setup. The assessors office, the tax collector, and the treasurer are among those whose responsibilities will be covered in the study. The resignation of Florrie Blackbird was cited by the finance committee as giving this item special urgency

TECH SCHOOL

Voters agreed to allow the Town of Orange to join Franklin County Regional Technical School. There were conflicting reports over whether the school was already full or had space for the addition of students from one of Franklin County's largest towns. They were settled by Al Diemand, representative to the board, who said there was adequate space.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department budget came under the greatest scrutiny. This was partly because of what turned out to be a misprint in the finance committee report--a $1,000 mistake in last year's expenses line item made the current request look like a 61% increase. When the mistake was discovered, the request was left untouched. However, a citizen remembered that the department had indicated during debate a year ago if the new police cruiser wer purchased, vehicle expenses would be only $500. The $1,000 request for that item was consequently reduced to $500.

NUCLEAR TEST BAN

The town accepted a resolution calling for a freeze on the testing of Nuclear weapons in response to the ongoing suspension of testing by the Soviet Union. The freeze should be "mutual and verifiable," according to the resolution, and it called upon the state's congressional delegation to support legislation to the same end.

SANCTUARY

The Town of Wendell was declared a sanctuary and refuge for Central American refugees, specifically Salvadoran and Guatemalen "until such time as they can safely return to their homelands or ... are granted (U.S.) residency status." Furthermore, "to the extent legally possible, "the resolution said, "no Town employee or department shall officially assist or voluntarily cooperate with investigations or arrest procedures relating to alleged violations of immigration law."

Jonathan von Ranson

Invitation to Program On Our Groundwater

On June 16, 17 and 18, I will present a slide show on ground water protection and steps we can take locally to protect our wells and water sources.

The first two nights are especially for town officials and will be held on their regular meeting nights.

On the 16th, the Planning Board and Conservation Commission will meet; the 17th is for the Selectboard, Board of Health, Fire, Police, Civil Defense and other town officials. The 18th, a Wed., is especially for the public, although anyone may attend any evening if unable to on Wed., as all meetings are open to the public.

I hope to inspire a heavy attendance as we can do much to protect our H20 if only we know how.

Hope to be of help,
Nina Keller
Hazardous Waste Coordinator

Diemand's Egg Farm
617
544-3806

WANTED
Wendell, Erving & Warwick
CORRESPONDENTS
For
Athol Daily News
CALL 249-3535 OR WRITE:
BARNEY CUMMINGS, EDITOR
ATHOL DAILY NEWS
BOX A
ATHOL, MASS. 01331

Outdoors in Wendell ~ Rumors On The Water

For a while in early March the Millers River was reminiscent of the early seventies The source of the milky greenish effluent, clearly noticable from the Depot Bridge, was quickly tracked down by members of the Millers River Watershed Council. The waste water treatment plant at the Baldwinville Products paper mill, owned by Erving Paper and situated on the Otter River, a major tributary of the Millers, was fingered. A call to the Department of Enviornmental Quality Engineering by Athol Daily News reporter Joe Mitko elicited the response that the river had been tested this past summer and they felt that the water quality was fine.

At a subsequent meeting of the MRWC, guest speaker Ed Shouclair, a land use planner for the Mass. Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife suggested that, as a strategy to generate local grassroots pressure, the council petition the DFW to threaten not to stock the river unless the pollution is halted. This suggestion was misquoted by th media and rumors spread that the river wasn't going to be stocked. At the same meeting, the MRWC decided to hire a private firm to test the river and to inivte DEQE, Erving Paper Co., local politicians, and the press to a public meeting to discuss the issue. By the time that meeting took place, DEQE, had tested the water and cited Erving Paper for violating their waste water treatment effluent limitations. Within a few days the river water returned to its proper color and clarity.

On April 2 the MRWC met in Athol with two representitives of DEQE, five from Erving Paper Representitive Mary Jane McKenna, Senetor Wetmore's representitive, the press, members of the Athol Conservation Commision and other interested citizens. MRWC president, Henry Waidlich took the opportunity to chastize the DEQE for not getting on the case sooner and Erving Paper for abusing the people's river.

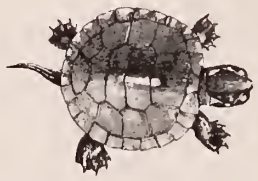
Paul Mallett, corporate technical director for Erving Paper, testified that the problem developed when one of the treatment plant operators went on vacation and a mechanical malfunction lead to a biological breakdown causing the plant's capabilities to go into a "tail spin" which took days of around the clock work to rectify. Saying that they had learned a serious lesson from experience, Mr. Mallett apologized for defiling the river and pledged that they have taken steps to prevent reoccurence of a similar incident.

Robert Kimball, DEQE's deputy regional environmental manager, on the other hand, came across defensively from the start , defending the agency's record and the paper company, and attacked the press for making inaccurate statements. Kathy Becker questioned why DEQE, the enforcement arm of the Mass Dept. of Environmental Management, seemed to be defending a paper company against the MRWC, a citizens environmental protection organization. Mr. Kimball didn't seem to have an answer. Carol Skrabis, reporter for The Recorder, said that she had tried to reach Mr. Kimball repeatedly and had to call him at home to get answers to her questions.

Hopefully, an outcome of the meeting will be that DEQE and the industries will realize that the Millers River has guardians that must be taken seriously, and that abuses of water quality and poor enforcement of water quality standards will not be tolerated.

Another affront to our river was recently made by Gary Sanderson of The Recorder. On April 4th, the paper printed a lengthly top of the front page story raising the specter of PCBs in the Millers. Based on apparently routine tests, (the results of which have not come in yet), taken by DEQE last fall by request of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the story speculates endlessly about nothing. He quotes DEQE's supervising sanitary engineer Alan Cooperman as saying that he has "no reason to believe there is a PCB problem on the Millers" but continues on as if there is a reason for alarm. Published on the eve of the River Rat Race, the article is another episode of Mr. Sanderson's long ongoing campaign to malign the Millers. Gary's hadden agenda is that he is an avid devotee of the Deerfield River and apparently feels that every trout and salmon that goes into the Millers is one less for his creel. Bottom line is that, (and for some reason Gary missed this data), the Millers was thoroughly tested for PCBs and heavy metals by a private firm hired by the MDC in 1982 as part of their diversion plan report and found traces to be negligible and in fact, far less than most of the rivers of its size in the country. With friends like Mr. Sanderson, the Millers River doesn't need enemies.

P.S, The river has been stocked with Brook, Brown, and Rainbow trout this Spring and will get its alottment of atlantic salmon carefully, so that they may come back from the ocean as fifteen pounders, and limit you kill, don't kill you limit. Tight lines.



An Hour in the Life of A Telephone Customer

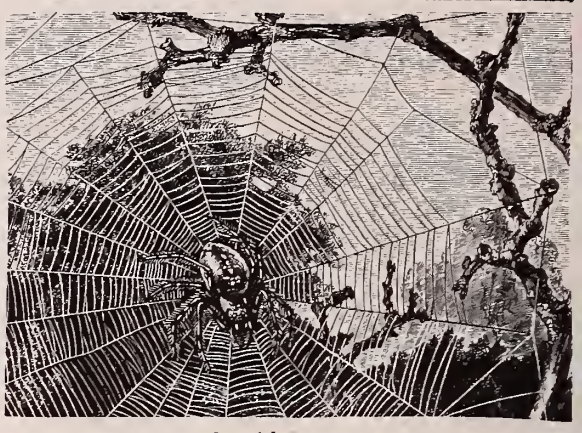
It happened one afternoon:

4:45 I was cut off while making a call to Maine using AT&T. I called N.E. Tel. Repair (1-555-1611) to get credit for the call. I was told that it was AT&T's problem and was given an 800 number to reach them. After dialing this number (1-800-222-3000), I got a dial tone. The N.E. Tel. call didn't go through.

4:55 I called back N.E. Tel and talked with Dot and reported the problem of the call not going through.

5:05 I then talked with Diane at AT&T Repair in Jacksonville, FL (1-800-222-3000) and I got a referral number, AB06014, for my complaint and was told that someone would get in touch with me to discuss my problem in depth.

5:15 Ron Rairigh called me from AT&T, Cambridge, MA, and proceeded to fill me in on what really was happening. We discussed the possible routes my call would take from Wendell to Surrv. ME. Ron thought



the call probably was a radio signal (microwave) from Orange to Springfield and the same from Springfield, MA to Portland, ME and then a land line to Surry. I had finally found somone that was could discuss honestly and with intelligence the problem at hand.

6:20 Ron called again to tell me he had talked with some of his people and "there were" problems North of Portland and we agreed that we would talk Monday after he had more details.

This was one hour spent dealing with the N.E. Tel. phone system. I am sure we could all go on at length about other phone tales.

This was all the more interesting due to the fact that I had just attended a N.E. Tel. hearing, May 28 at the Athol Town Hall, put on by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities.

The testimony given by John E. Briggs of N.E. Tel. amounted to the fact that N.E. Tel. has decided that their service to the 544 and 249 areas is "excellent service by any standards." They arrive at this conclusion by the "Report Rate" or the number of repair reports from customers. It hadn't occurred to them that most people had stopped reporting problems because they felt it didn't do any good, as evidenced by a show of hands by the 150 people attending.

People had the opportunity to find others with as bad phone problems as themselves and many made sworn statements into the record stating their particular complaint about AT&T's poor service.

The testimony by Mr. Briggs did say, "In conclusion, I would strongly encourage any customer who has a problem with their telephone service to report those problems as completely and on as timely a basis as possible."

N.E. Tel. Repair	1-555-1611
AT&T Repair	1-800-222-3000
Mass. D.P.U.	1-727-3500

Representative Carmen Buell suggested calling the DPU, and letting them know that this situation is not satisfactory. We do not have to live in Boston to have reliable and up-to-date telephone service.

Anyone interested in reading more on this matter can turn to the Recorder, Friday, May 30, 1986, page 4, PHONE USERS COMPLAINTS ABOUT SERVICE AT HEARING, and you may get a copy of the testimony by N.E. Tel. by contacting the Athol-Orange Chamber of Commerce.

- David H. White

Horseshoeing
Tony Diemand 544-3806

FIREWOOD
LOG TRUCK LOADS
4 FOOT LENGTHS
STOVE LENGTHS
STAR ROUTE 10
WENDELL DEPOT
MASS. 01380
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FIREWOOD & LOGGING
WENDELL, MASS
617-544-2773
DAVID WILDER JUDY WILDER

Burnett Builders
544-3430
Wendell Ma.

Wendell Old Home Day

Saturday, July 12, 1986

9:00 a.m.	Road Race (info: Beth Erviti, 544-3250)
10:00 a.m.	Horse Drill, Swift River Rider 4-H Club
	Children's Parade, led by S.R.R. 4-H Club
	Moms, Dads, children of all ages: decorate your bikes and carriages, dress as clowns and join us for a march around the common. (Could this be Wendell's Mardi Gras?)
11:00 a.m.	Joshua J, the Waffles Clown Leading songs for children
11:30 a.m.	New "Fun and Follies" obstacle course. Your 4-member team (7 and up) will participate in a new fun and follies obstacle course in the center of the common.
1-5 p.m.	Music on the Common Red, White and Blue (Doug Huntington's band), Lester Scafidi, Rick Ledford and Bob Rosser, Perry Howarth and more...
5:30 p.m.	Wendell's own Diemand Famous B-B-Q Chicken Dinner. Tickets sold throughout the day, or join us with your picnic supper.
6-9 p.m.	Sunset Concert on the Common. Outerspace Band is starting out their summer tour in Wendell!!!

There will be booths for arts and crafts, raffles, demonstrations, tag sales, games for children, friends to visit, great music to listen or dance to.

Come and join us to make this Old Home Day special!

Wendell Old Home Day is still in the planning stages so if you have any ideas, suggestions or energy please call Lisa Aubin, 544-7636, or Anne Diemand, 544-6111.

Church Seeks Bell Tower Bid

The Wendell Church wants bids for the following work:

* bell tower roofing
* bell tower painting
* front sill repair

Contractors can call Pam Perrell at 544-7587.

Many thanks to those who have contributed to the small but growing maintenance fund.

We also need volunteers to scrape and paint clapboards, and to oil, glaze and paint windows during the first and second Saturday afternoon of each month beginning in July. Whenever possible people should bring their own tools.

- A. Parker Cleveland

Forest + Parks Offers Trail Adoption Proposal

The proposed Dept. of Environmental Management's Adopt-A-Trail program is an innovative approach to the maintenance of the commonwealth's recreational trails located on public lands.

The Adopt-A-Trail program seeks to encourage citizens to "own" a favorite trail or group of trails which they use often and to maintain it on their own schedule. The trail adopter would do so with the complete knowledge that he/she has the permission of D.E.M. and the full trust of the park supervisor to perform minor trail work such as but not limited to: removal of brush and windfall, maintenance of signs and blazes, removal of litter, public education, assisting in trail relocation and construction, and the reporting of acts of vandalism and other prohibited acts to the park staff, police, or other law enforcement agency.

Below is a list of people to write to about this proposal. Let's get their attention. Please write to them and show your support for this necessary program.

Direct questions and suggestions to: Chris Ryan RFD #6 266 Stanley St. Amherst, MA 01002 413-256-6709.

Dir. Gilbert Bliss	Com. William Geary
Div. Forest & Parks	Metropol. Dist. Comm.
100 Cambridge St.	20 Somerset St.
Boston, MA 02202	Boston, MA 02108

Benson Says Vigilance Is Needed to Save Area

Former State Representative Bill Benson announced he will seek election for the post of Franklin County Commissioner. "We have our work cut out for us," Benson told supporters. "The preservation of our rural character will require vigilance, activism and most importantly, leadership."

Benson presently holds the position of Vice-President for Industrial and Commercial Development for Countryside Realty in Orange.

In that capacity, Benson has worked with members of the business community in the Mt. Grace region to attract new businesses and jobs to the county. Benson lives in Greenfield with his wife, Karin, and son, Ivan, a freshman at Greenfield High School.

"We have built a community here that very few other places have," Benson noted in his remarks. "But Franklin County faces some formidable challenges to our way of life: How will we protect our groundwater from the threat of poison like the tragedy in Whately? Will we be the unwilling host of someone else's high or low-level radioactive wastes? Can our towns cope with the pressures for growth, and still maintain our small town character? Can we hold onto an industry like GTD? Can we protect the small towns like Wendell and Leverett from herbicide spraying they oppose? These are just a few of the real problems we have to solve now, and in the very near future."

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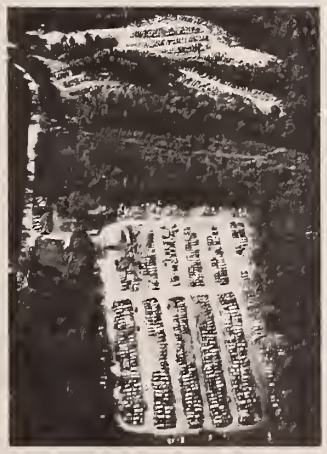

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'Is This the Party To Whom I am Speaking?'

A Letter to the Post ...

Living in Wendell I have gotten used to "lousy" phone service. I deal with disconnections, trying a number three times before I get through, getting wrong numbers, trying to reach my own home and having the operator tell me the phone has been disconnected and more annoyances. The one that brings me back to my childhood and the "party-line" days is when I pick up the phone only to have two people talking to each other on my private line.

On May 28, I attended a New England Telephone hearing at the Athol Town Hall. While listening to people give their grievances, a woman from Royalston spoke about talking with her daughter in Orange and having a lady from Wendell pick up the phone and ask them what they were doing on her line. Finishing her speech, the woman said, "Well, I would just like to meet that lady from Wendell." So I got up and introduced myself. Now when this happens again, I know I can call her Barbara.

Sometimes, I wish that life was simpler and I didn't depend on the phone as much as I do. However, since I do and I pay good money for the service, I need to report to the phone company when I have even the slightest problem, because that is the only way they are going to know the service isn't what it should be.

Anne Diemand

Liked Contra Dance In Town Hall

Contra dancing at the Town Hall this Sunday night was great. Personally, I've come from a dancing environment. As a child, I've experienced my mother dancing the Charlston in the kitchen and also I have had the opportunity to dance to Punk Rock.

It saddens me to know that there used to be square dances at the Depot and the Wendell Town Hall frequently. In the third grade, I listened to the first Rock and Roll station that was in New York City. Nowadays, I hear an occasional insert on WAAF (a goof) about "we gotta put a stop to this Communist influence in this Rock and Roll music". This particular attitude of the 50's reminds me of society's attitude towards dancing back then.

I must admit I had no idea that the night was going to be so great. Tonight, I experienced the natural turn the brain off alot when dancing (spaced out). A good size group formed that I see as a parallel to punk rock dancing, yet unable to compare with most ways of dancing.

The spontaneity of the experienced and the inexperienced Contra Dancers will not be forgotten. As I was thinking about what to write at the dance, right in front of me was little Christina Cleveland being perpetually spontaneous. She was one of my teachers that night.

My thanks again to the great musicians. And, Oh, was all that homemade food good.

D.A. Froebel

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Seafood Eatery Serves Real Scallops

by the Phantom Gourmet

Captain Ben's Chowder House Restaurant
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Located in the expansive building once part of Stone's flea market sandwiched between Rt. 2 and the westbound exit ramp, Captain Ben's is a new addition to the area's restaurant scene. We sampled their wares one weekday evening on the late side and found ourselves to be almost the only patrons. However the air was noticeably stale and smoky and left us wondering if they had better ventilation to use when it was crowded. Decor is businesslike, brightly lit with the mandatory nautical decorations befitting a seafood eatery.

Beer and wine are served but selections are very limited. Service was cordial despite the late hour. Rolls were brought promptly but were hard, cold and not great -- but at least with real butter. Being in a chowder house we ordered both the clam and seafood chowder and were pleased with the simple rendition far from the viscous flour-based stock that tries to pass as rich at many places. Nothing fancy, just good seafood and potatoes in a milky stock with some butter. Appetizers are limited to fruit cup with sherbet and chilled tomato juice. Entrees fall into two categories: fried seafood and baked seafood. (Chicken nuggets for those who want to eat something that breathes air).

My guest ordered the fried seafood platter ($8.99) and was presented with enough food for all three of us. Two haddock fillets, each at least 8 oz., surrounded a herculean mound of fried oysters and scallops and french fries topped with a jumbo (the kind that is usually stuffed and baked) shrimp. All tasted fresh, were not greasy, and the batter delicate but crispy. The scallops were sea scallops and not the less expensive southern calico bay scallops most restaurants try to get away with.

From the baked side of the menu we tried the scallops en casserole with dover sauce and crabmeat stuffing ($8.99) and baked stuffed sole with the same sauce and stuffing ($7.50). Again the portions were more than ample, the scallops and sole moist and not over-baked and the crab in the stuffing real, not the ubiquitous ersatz extruded substance often served in its stead. The sauce, however, was an unctuous creation that lacked character or delicacy. A pilaf-style rice was served with the baked dishes and was good. Frieds come with cole slaw, better than average, and bakes with salad. Bleu cheese dressing was gummy. Desserts are ice cream, sherbet, or apple pie.

Plan to spend at least ten dollars each here and for the most part worth it if you enjoy good fresh seafood and like to walk out with a full belly. No plastic money accepted yet but maybe this summer. Open Wednesday thru Sunday til 9 p.m.

New Salem Academy Closes

A bold three-year experiment in alternative education has ended. On Monday, June 2, the New Salem Academy Board of Trustees voted 8-5 not to reopen the school which had operated since September 1982 under the cooperative direction of Nat Needle and six staff. A severe shortage of funds to meet the Academy's miniscule operating budget was cited as the only reason to end the program, widely acknowledged to be successful. All of the trustees expressed sincere regret; however, it was the voices of the fiscal realists which carried the vote.

Students and staff reacted with shock and disbelief to the news. All had realized the possibility existed, but NSA had survived similar scares each year.

With only 5¼ teaching positions, a business manager and a small materials budget, the Academy offered a complete high school program at $130,000 total yearly budget. At $3,200 full tuition, the students (22 this past year) accounted for only half that amount. Since history shows a clear 3-5-year start-up period for alternative schools, the deficit was not unexpected. The NSA Trustees funded the lion's share of this deficit over three years with monies remaining in the school's treasury when it last closed in 1968. The remainder was made up by school fundraising drives, events, donations and grants. It was hoped that enrollment would have reached 35-40 students by this time. Despite a continued increase in admissions for September and personal pledges from two trustees for a total of $14,000, the Board was still looking at a possible $20-30,000 shortfall for next year alone.

There was an undercurrent of anger and cynicism on the school's closing retreat in early June. For those students who were counting on returning next year as well as those who were graduating or moving on, the Board's decision struck deep. There were many wet eyes, long embraces, bouts of morbic humor, bursts of inspiration and renewed hope born of vigilante fundraising schemes.

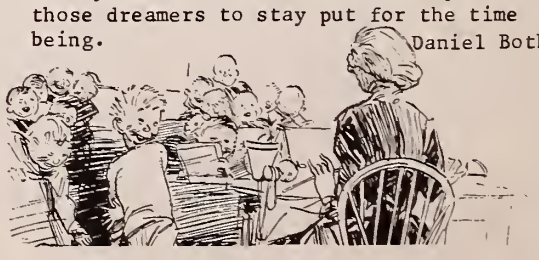
However, none of those present at the lakeside retreat in Goshen failed to realize the unique quality of the experience they'd just finished. Students spoke of the intimate community feeling and the relaxed learning format. Each day at NSA began with a circle consisting of between 20 and 30 people (one dog, a moment of silence, sometimes singing, sometimes bickering, sharing of personal news, current events, school business and whatever else needed to be said.

At times the school ran by consensus, hammering out long and tough compromises on school policies and plans. At other times, students battled with staff over their rights and responsibilities. These were powerful moments and of course, the question of power relations was never wholly put to rest.

NSA's flirtation with solvency was not a utopian affair. It was an endeavor of caring people more or less dedicated to a humanistic/academic curriculum and to being creative together. Understandably, students remained more dedicated to the humanistic agenda than the academic! Indeed, on several occasions over the years Nat and others had fantasized passionately about dumping everything except the performing arts and taking the whole school on long learning adventures performing street-theater musicals like the recent "Nazrudin."

The school's charter, funding and approval by the local school board compelled those dreamers to stay put for the time being.

Daniel Botkin



Fire Log

April 1 Railroad fire east of Houghton's Trestles
3 Brush fire at Gilbert Mitchell's-Locks Village Road
17 Railroad fire three fourth's mile east of Farley crossing
23 Barn fire at Diemand's residence on Mormon Hollow Rd.
May 3 Mutual aid - Montague Plains
6 Dryer fire - Sundell residence Locks Village Rd.
10 Medical emergency - Smith residence Cooleyville Rd.

Police Log

April 3 Two car accident on Locks Village - Minor injury to one person
5 Burned out green Ford Falcon found on Sears Rd.
6 Arrested Kathy Sandlin for violating a restraining order
9 Break at Country Store - Arrested two male juveniles
29 Medical emergency at residence on Locks Village Rd.
May 3 Breaking and entering at MacGregor residence off of Cooleyville Rd.
4 Accident on Mormon Hollow Rd. No injuries.
10 Medical emergency on Cooleyville Rd.
10 Loud party on Farley Rd.
11 Tower alarm on Lock Hill went off
12 Arrested Steven Beman for assault
18 Two vehicles vandalized on Farley Rd.
30 Unwanted person reported on Davis Turn Rd. Their vehicle towed away.

Property Transfers

Linda Pirog to Virginia Schimmel, 1.4 acres and buildings on East Main Street.

William A. Norris to Fred L. Heyes III, approx. 40 acres and 35 acres on Jennison Road.

Edwin L. Zieminski to Charles P. Molinari, 24.105 acres on west side of New Salem Road.

John Kurtis Ballantine and Erna Celeste to Christopher and Diana Smith, 5.047 acres on north side of Cooleyville Road.

Sally A. Howe to Charles Laliberte, 6.7 acres on Lock Hill Road #1.

Sally A. Howe to Jon McMilleon, 4.3 acres on Lock Hill Road #1.

Births

CONGRATULATIONS to Christine and David Ewell of Stone Rd. on the birth of their daughter, Keri Lynn Ewell, 8 lbs. 10 oz., born in Franklin Medical Center on May 27.

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Back to Land: And What Happened?

I know of a chimney that stands naked beneath a stand of white pine on a mountainside, far from the sounds of industry and urban life. All that is heard is the whisper of wind through needles and the chatter of scurrying red squirrels. I don't know what happened to the cabin that once sheltered the chimney; I just know it is gone. The chimney remains like the soul of a once whole being, now cold and exposed with no fire to warm the air and light the night.

I am distressed at what has happened to the back-to-the-land movement. Does the chimney represent all that is left of a voice that once cried so indignantly, "Enough is enough!"? Is it all that is

left of a vision that saw the wisdom in sustainable self-sufficiency, and the greed and irresponsibility in our high-tech, consuming nation? Is it the tattered remains of a movemant that hoped to reverse the "forward" motion of a society of sybarites showing no regard for their children's heritage? The signs are discouraging.

Not long ago I heard a commentary on a radio news program by a writer who spoke of leaving his rural ways for the city. He described how committed he had been to "the power of compost" and all of the noble ideals so inherent in a lifestyle close to

Back to the Land... cont'

the land. But he was older now, in his 40's, and somewhere along the journey his priorities began to change. The power of compost began to fizzle, paling next to the beckoning power of the urban scene. He turned in his coveralls for a three-piece suit and a new career, admitting that many years earlier he would have labeled this course of action "selling out." He later mused, "Funny how you change."

The commentator did sell out (and must realize it if he's honest with himself), and there's nothing funny about it. Many middle-aged homesteaders appear to be turning away from the homesteading lifestyle they embraced in the 1960's with very few young people turning toward it. There is no longer a movement to forsake contemporary methods of earning an income in preferance for more traditional means of survival, so for those few young people interested in homesteading today, there is little support among their peers. Homesteading is a difficult and demanding lifestyle without the added handicap of an unsupportive community and lack of encouragement.

Going back to the land during the 1960's movement was much easier than today, simply because it was a movement. The encouragement and support among peers was there (including the existence of cheap rural land). Homesteading became a reality for many who believed in it. This latter group are the ones now turning from compost to computers, from storytelling to VCR's, from food co-operatives to supermarket chains. They speak of their homesteading days as "having done that," as if it were only a phase rather than a lifelong commitment.

They are older now, and the "advantages" of modern society look more and more tantalizing, and given the shrinking base of crucial support which once helped them begin homesteading, they slowly begin to get out. Some capitulate totally to the dominant paradigm (like the commentator), while others remain on their homesteads with less conviction than before. Either way, the trend has been away from self-sufficiency by the very people who so vehemently espoused it two decades ago. That is the tragedy of the back-to-the-land movement.

As our fast-paced society continues alienating us so quickly from our roots and anything real, disconnected and discontented feelings are bound to arise and grow as control over our own lives moves further and further away. Perhaps the emergence of those ancestral feelings will help re-kindle a new movement toward a homesteading ethic, and renew our vision of a healthy, sustainable society. The choice is still ours. We can turn it around voluntarily, or an unhealthy planet will do it for us.

Robert Streeter

Test Ban Film Highlights Service

On a hot Sunday afternoon in May, some townspeople put away their garden tools early to help the Wendell Church celebrate its fifth annual Peace Pentecost. After a

After a warm and friendly potluck supper at the town hall, Michael Holroyed from the American Friends' Service Committee presented the video tape "Stopping Nuclear War, the First Step." The video led to a heated discussion as to whether "the Big Mac of anti-nuke films" is a useful tool for informing and involving conservative and apathetic U.S. citizens in the perils of the arms race. Or does the narrow idea of stopping nuclear testing miss the broader implications of the nuclear threat?

Although no conclusions were drawn on the film, all agreed that the nuclear test ban was worth working for. It was decided to petition Silvio Conte to support a House bill to stop testing and to continue letter writing and phone messages to all members of the political machine about the issue.

The gathering adjourned to the church for prayers for peace in the world and wonderful singing led by an a cappella quartet from Amherst.

The church will continue to be open throughout the summer at 6:30 p.m. each Sunday.

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Wendell Music Scene

After a long series of delays, namely Fall, Winter and Spring, Summer -- that much-touted season of outdoor frolic -- suddenly looms on the near horizon. It's never too early to start ordering wood, but hopefully we'll all have a chance to take in an outdoor music festival or two before this loveliest of New England seasons wanes once again into the bracing Autumn chill.

Look for an early date on Wendell Old Home Day this year. Make that Saturday, July 12th. Though at press time, some performers remain unconfirmed, the music stage on Wendell Common will feature sets by prolific songster Lester Scafidi; Rick Ledford and Bob Rosser; Perry Howarth; and Doug Huntington's new R&B rocking outfit, Red White and Blue. Capping the day's entertainment will be an evening set by a reunionized Outerspace Band. It should be a lot of fun folks, so don't miss it!

Loose Caboose has been busy as it rolls into its second decade, ever mindful of the general trend toward eliminating its namesake from contemporary railroading. In March, they debuted a new drummer, Worcester's polyrhythmic Willie Pye. In May a keyboardist, Andrew Dickinson, added his full Hammond B3 sound to the reggae mix, while at the same time, Jonathan Dorr, guitarist and perseverent founding member since '74, lopped off the Caboose to pursue individual inclimations in music and life. Nevertheless, the band has a busy summer planned with a New York City debut at the Manhattan Reggae Lounge, June 29, and an August trip to Virginia Beach, VA in the works. Check out the new sound outdoors at Bucksteep Manor in Bechett, Mass. on Sunday, July 27 on a bill also featuring Cool Runnings and Wilson Blue and the Blue Roots Band.

The Wendell coffeehouse ended a full eight months of operation on Memorial Day weekend. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Anne Zak, Waffles, Jimi Twofeathers and everyone else who has worked so hard to keep these shows happening for such a good cause, with virtually no personal financial remuneration. One of the year's finest times had to have been Debbie Fier's feature in April. Debbie is relocating to the west coast this summer, but we hope to see her back in Wendell soon. Debbie's new LP, entitled "Firelight", is all instrumental and features former members of Laura Nyro's band.

Klondike sound is as busy as ever, having just returned from the seventeenth annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival where they oversaw sound reproduction for the great festival which this year featured Miles Davis Sippie Wallace, Natalie Cole, B.B. King, Nina Simone, Olatunji, Jerry Lee Lewis, the Neville Brothers, Burning Spear, Joan Baez, Stevie Ray Vaughn and Odetta, to name a ... Phew what a lineup! Aside from joining his fellow Spacemen for shows this summer, Klon will keep up the pace with the sound company, notably with New Hampshire's folk star Tom Rush.

There are several new bands and musical coalitions in the works hereabouts. Doug Tanner has been contributing his considerable fiddle and mandolin skills to the well-established country rock group Billings Gap. Another Doug, Huntington that is, of Magic Music reknown, has formed a new band with Bob Rosser called Red, White and Blue. They're just starting to take their brand of good time rock n' rock and rhythm and blues out of the rehearsal hall and should be red hot indeed by Old Home Day. Heartsong, that erstwhile folk poet, who now resides in Montague has put together a fine group to showcase songs from his Wendell made LP and other originals (up to sixty of them and counting). Reports from an outdoor concert in New Salem last month were that the bank has an ethereal Grateful Dead groove.

Reggae fans take note: tune in to 92 FM on your dial on Wednesday evenings from 10 p.m. til the following morning at 1 a.m. for the "Universal Party" hosted by yours truly of WGAJ, Franklin County's first noncommercial station. It's Electric, as Bunny and Marcia would say. Til next time, Music and Peace for all.

- David Boatwright

Questionaires Arriving; More Being Sought

So far 25% of the questionnaires of the planning and conservation boards have been returned and the board members wish to thank everyone who has participated. Additional returns will still be accepted at the Wendell Country Store.

After tabulating returns, the boards will bring proposals for zoning changes before the voters. Thereafter they expect to discuss master planning, open-space planning and concerns for future growth.

Bridge cont' from front page

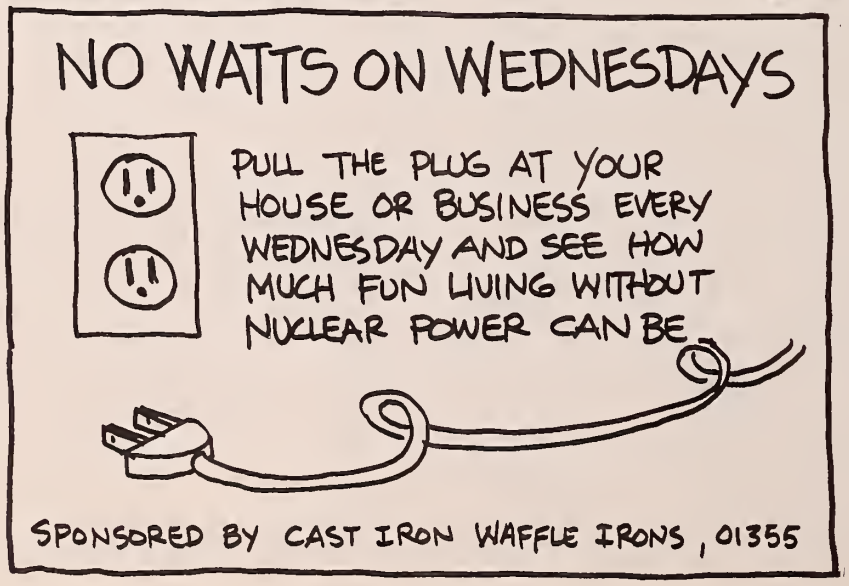
interested in buying the parcels which are along the river and incorporating them into the state forest.

At the hearing, the selectboard, planning, finance, and conservation committees and the petition signers all agreed that development of these properties would not likely be in the best interest of the town. The finance and planning committees were asked to do a study and give a report.

Petition signers were hoping that if action were stopped on the bridge, perhaps the town, with Erving and the state, could come to a realization that building the bridge was in nobody's best interest.

There will be items on the June "clean-up" Special Town Meeting concerning the issue of development in the bridge area.

Susan DunLany



Town Considering... cont' from front page

the Selectmen are now considering the purchase of six acres on Depot Road just beyond the intersection with Plain Rd. The negotiation for the land swap is still proceeding, however, since the tract that the town would acquire would be suitable for a recreation park.

The foregoing information was communicated to the writer by Jim Slavas.

Julian Wadleigh

Derailment cont' from front page

Strauss. "It felt as if we were going even faster the second time." It must have been the effect of stress, because as he himself said afterwards, "Of course it operates by gravity, and we couldn't possibly have been going faster, except perhaps at the end where the first time the brakes may have worked a little to slow us down."

By the time the train came into the platform, the riders realized the train's speed was too great for the sharp corner ahead. Barely slowing, it careened around the corner. In the rearmost c ars, where two park personnel on a break and "possibly" two Swift River School students had been riding, the suspense was the greatest, since this is where most of the whiplash effect is felt. This time it ended with a wrenching tumble of the rear cars over onto their sides, the middle cars tipped partially, and the front cars stopped with all four wheels on the track, as Strauss recollected.

"It was a principal's worst nightmare," he recalled three days later. "Absolutely the worst. It was frightening for myself in a personal way, plus there was the whole train of kids."

Strauss said he was "not sure whether anybody was thrown out" of the train at the end. He said there were no injuries worse than "a few bruises and scrapes." The worst ones were "because the kids were dragged a little bit, I think." Youngsters made conflicting reports of whether the bar that held them in came out or not. Those in one car claimed they had to work to keep their bar in place, Strauss reported. Some from another car said they had trouble releasing the bar at the end.

The children reacted variously. In the flurry while adults attended to some of the more frightened and scraped children, several older youngsters who had been on the ride strolled off. "We had to round them up," Strauss said. Overall, he observed that "The ones who cried right away or yakkety-yakked seemed to be in better shape by the time we got back," he said. "A couple of the others--it tended to be the older ones--were visibly shaken after we got back to school."

Would the school make another trip to Mountain Park? "I have two feelings about that," Strauss answered. "We want to be sure the kids don't get the wrong message if we don't go back. But it would be hard for me to trust Mountain Park for the likelihood of safety. We will want more input from the community before I make a decision. Our present inclination is not to go back."

Strauss said the school has asked the amusement park for an explanation. He said he's been told the park had "fired somebody." "That sounds better than saying they had a brake failure," he commented. Strauss said the park officials told Sup't of Schools Leonard Lubinsky the coaster had been inspected last April.

Jonathan von Ranson